

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7-16 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 14 are amended and Claim 6 is canceled by the present amendment.

Amendments to the claims find support in the application as originally filed. Thus, no new matter is added.

This amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, which after final rejection permits entering of amendments, canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3, 9-14, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,356,929 to Gall et al. (herein "Gall"); Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gall in view of U.S. Patent 6,598,067 to Wydra et al. (herein "Wydra"); Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gall in view of what was well-known in the art; and Claims 6-8 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

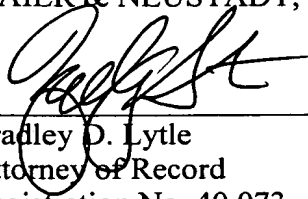
Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 6-8. Accordingly, independent Claims 1 and 14 are amended to recite features similar to those of allowable Claim 6, which is accordingly canceled without disclaimer or prejudice. Therefore, it is believed that independent Claims 1 and 14, and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Application No. 09/656,969  
Reply to Office Action of February 8, 2007

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



---

Bradley D. Lytle  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 40,073

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 03/06)

Zachary S. Stern  
Registration No. 54,719

I:\ATTY\ZS\28's\282\282624US\282624US-AM DUE 5-8-07.DOC